

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, December 1, 1889, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Nebraska, December 1, 1888-9. My dear Alec:

A telegram from Mamma says, "Alice breakfasts at Pollocks" so I know that you were safe and I hope well a few hours ago. I suppose you are with Mamma and Grace and Charlie in the big hall now perhaps by a big fire that reminds you of ours at Beinn Bhreagh. Then bye and bye when I have retired behind my curtains and darkness falls on our car your lamp in Papa's room will be lighted and you will go to work on your Census review. Don't kill yourself over it I cannot do without you.

We have passed Omaha and are now going off from a track filled with many memories of that other Westward trip of ours when Sister was with us. Truly as one glances back on the long range of years is it like following with the eye the long line of railroad as it stretches out on the level prairies back and back till the two parallel lines become merged in one and then are lost in the distance. I remember the incidents of that trip so distinctly, recognized so instantly the very spot where first I saw water and asked Sister if that were the Missouri and yet what countless ages ago it was.

They were all so kind and nice to me in Chicago,—after seeing Cambridge and finding our old home gone forever it was a great comfort to see Willie's good-natured honest face so completely unchanged. I told him it was far more like home again than seeing our house. Of course there is a change, he is so stout now that his neck is all gone and his face carried straight down into his collar but you only notice that in his profile. He told me that first year in College was the "ideal year". Aunt Fanny was as nice and friendly

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as possible and so was Harry. I do think I have some very nice relations and refuse to consider the break in our cousinship.

I was so surprised to find Chicago so smoky, I asked if our day there was a specimen day and was assured it was. The sky was blue above the smoke line but the sun shone through white and pale with all it's color taken out and producing a very strange cold grey light. The lake had not the faintest tinge of color in it being gray and white like sky and shore, only the white breakers as they broke on the grey sand relieving the strange intensely cold monotony. I have seen pictures of this cold look, it was not really cold, but never beheld it in nature. This evening we were treated to another phenomenon, a green and red sunset, the colors exactly like the green and red of a parrot's wing.

It's astonishing how empty the cars are, there are only two people and a half besides ourselves in this, and the others on this train or in others as they pass seem to be about equally empty. So much the better for us but this is the North Western and we are stockholders. I am disappointed that the houses as we pass look so poor, unpainted houses that started well but either didn't get finished or have been grievously neglected. Indian corn seems to be the principal crop and miles and miles of it stretch away to the low hills that bound the horizon. I have written to Mr. McCurdy on a lot of business which I am afraid you wouldn't attend to. Please ask him to tell you about it, I can't repeat it all this is hard work.

Much love to you and my children and Mamma, Lovingly, Mabel.